

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MARTIN 00347 231834Z

47

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 FDRE-00 EB-07 PA-02 PRS-01

IO-13 MED-03 L-03 SCA-01 SCSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 NSC-05 CG-00 DOTE-00 AGR-10 SP-02 SS-15 /097 W

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P 231700Z AUG 76

FM AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2375

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

SECDEF PRIORITY

UNCLAS MARTINIQUE 0347

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, AEMR, FW

SUBJECT: GUADELOUPE VOLCANO ACTIVITY

REF: MARTINIQUE 0343

1. CONSULATE RECEIVED TELEGRAM AFTERNOON AUGUST 21 FROM FRENCH STATE SECRETARY OLIVIER STIRN, THEN IN GUADELOUPE, THANKING US FOR OUR OFFER TO EXTEND AID IN CONNECTION WITH THE GUADELOUPE VOLCANO. STIRN SAID THE EVACUATION OF THE POPULATION HAD GONE SMOOTHLY, BUT THE OVERALL SITUATION REMAINS UNCERTAIN. HE QUOTE TOOK NOTE UNQUOTE OF THE EQUIPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WE COULD PUT AT FRENCH DISPOSAL IF THE SITUATION WORSENS.

2. MEANWHILE THE SITUATION AT THE VOLCANO HAS REMAINED UNCHANGED ALTHOUGH IN THE 24 HOUR PERIOD SOME 120 SMALL EARTHQUAKES WERE REGISTERED IN BASSETERRE. THIS IS A HIGHER LEVEL ACTIVITY THAN THAT DURING THE LATTER PART OF LAST WEEK, BUT THE CHANCES OF A MASSIVE ERUPTION REMAIN UNKNOWN.

3. AUTHORITIES IN GUADELOUPE ARE NOW FOCUSSED ON THE LONG TERM ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE EVACUATION OF 72,000 PEOPLE FROM SOUTHERN BASSE-TERRE. THE EVACUATED AREA PRODUCES ALMOST ALL OF GUADELOUPE'S BANANAS AND 70 PERCENT OF ITS UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 MARTIN 00347 231834Z

VEGETABLE CROP. IF THE EMERGENCY CONTINUES LONG ENOUGH, THE ISLAND'S

ECONOMY COULD BE SEVERELY DAMAGED AND THE MAKESHIFT LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE REFUGEES COULD RESULT IN SERIOUS SOCIAL UNREST AND DISSATISFACTION. ONE BRIGHT SPOT IS THAT LIMITED NUMBERS OF WORKERS HAVE BEEN PERMITTED TO RE-ENTER CERTAIN AREAS FOR SHORT PERIOD OF WORK. BUT THE WORST PROSPECT IS THAT THE PRESENT SITUATION MAY CONTINUE FOR WEEKS , OR LONGER, WITH AUTHORITIES UNABLE TO PERMIT THE RETURN OF THE EVACUATED POPULATION TO THEIR HOMES, AMID A DETERIORATING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CLIMATE CAUSED BY POOR HOUSING, FOOD SHORTAGES AND THE GENERAL DISLOCATION OF LIFE. SHACKLETON

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